General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Agenda item 131

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/62/535)*]

62/225. Pattern of conferences

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 43/222 A to E of 21 December 1988, 51/211 A to E of 18 December 1996, 52/214 of 22 December 1997, 53/208 A to E of 18 December 1998, 54/248 of 23 December 1999, 55/222 of 23 December 2000, 56/242 of 24 December 2001, 56/254 D of 27 March 2002, 56/262 of 15 February 2002, 56/287 of 27 June 2002, 57/283 A of 20 December 2002, 57/283 B of 15 April 2003, 58/250 of 23 December 2003, 59/265 of 23 December 2004, 60/236 A of 23 December 2005, 60/236 B of 8 May 2006 and 61/236 of 22 December 2006,

Reaffirming its resolution 42/207 C of 11 December 1987, in which it requested the Secretary-General to ensure the equal treatment of the official languages of the United Nations,

Having considered the report of the Committee on Conferences for 2007[1] and the relevant reports of the Secretary-General,[2]

Having also considered the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[3]

Reaffirming the provisions relevant to conference services of its resolutions on multilingualism,

I

Calendar of conferences and meetings

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Committee on Conferences for 2007;[1]

2. *Approves* the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2008 and 2009, as submitted by the Committee on Conferences,[4]

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/62/32).

[2] A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1.

[3] A/62/473.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 32* (A/62/32), annex II.

taking into account the observations of the Committee and subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

3. *Authorizes* the Committee on Conferences to make any adjustments to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008 and 2009 that may become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session;

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Secretariat has taken into account the arrangements referred to in General Assembly resolutions 53/208 A, 54/248, 55/222, 56/242, 57/283 B, 58/250, 59/265, 60/236 A and 61/236 concerning Orthodox Good Friday and the official holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and requests all intergovernmental bodies to observe those decisions when planning their meetings;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that any modification to the calendar of conferences and meetings is implemented strictly in accordance with the mandate of the Committee on Conferences and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

II

A. Utilization of conference-servicing resources

1. *Reaffirms* the practice that, in the use of conference rooms, priority must be given to the meetings of Member States;

2. *Notes* that the overall utilization factor at the four main duty stations, while still above the established benchmark of 80 per cent, decreased from 85 per cent in 2005 to 83 per cent in 2006, although the planning accuracy factor improved by 5 per cent over the 2005 reporting period;

3. *Welcomes* the steps taken by those bodies that have adjusted their programmes of work in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources, and requests the Committee on Conferences to continue consultations with the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilize their conference-servicing resources;

4. *Recognizes* that late starts and unplanned early endings seriously affect the bodies' utilization factor owing to the amount of time lost, and invites the secretariats and bureaux of bodies to pay adequate attention to avoiding late starts and unplanned early endings;

5. *Also recognizes* the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States are met;

6. *Notes* that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States that were provided with interpretation services in the four main duty stations in 2006 decreased to 76 per cent, as compared with 87 per cent in 2005, expresses its concern about the difficulties experienced by Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to address this problem and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;

7. *Takes note with concern* of the information provided in paragraph 38 of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] and requests the Secretary-General to take measures to improve the planning of conference resource allocations with a view to ensuring that the bodies entitled to meet "as required" receive adequate conference services;

8. *Once again urges* intergovernmental bodies to spare no effort at the planning stage to take into account the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, to make provision for such meetings in their programmes of work and to notify conference services, well in advance, of any cancellations so that unutilized conference-servicing resources may, to the extent possible, be reassigned to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;

9. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with several General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/236, section II.A, paragraph 9, in conformity with the headquarters rule, all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies were held in Nairobi in 2006, but reiterates the need for vigilance in this respect, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-third session through the Committee on Conferences;

10. *Welcomes* the increased promotional activities undertaken by the management of the United Nations conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, which resulted in a utilization rate of 60.13 per cent in 2006, a marked increase over the 2005 rate of 42.23 per cent, which is an upward trend that is continuing, with a utilization rate of 75 per cent recorded as at 31 May 2007;

11. *Also welcomes* the cooperation agreement concluded by the Economic Commission for Africa with the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi with respect to the sharing of conference-servicing and information technology staff, as well as similar agreements reached with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the United Nations Office at Geneva and United Nations Headquarters in New York;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to explore means to increase the utilization of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, bearing in mind the headquarters minimum operating security standards, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

B. Impact of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach), on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation

1. *Requests* bodies whose meetings are listed in the calendar of conferences and meetings, when planning their meetings, especially major or high-level conferences, summits and special meetings, organs created under the Charter of the United Nations, their subsidiary bodies and other intergovernmental organizations and treaty bodies that normally meet at Headquarters to take into consideration the limitations and inflexibility of all conference facilities at Headquarters throughout the construction phase of the capital master plan;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the work of the Security Council during its night and weekend meetings is not affected by noise from

[5] A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2.

construction taking place underneath the Council conference rooms during the second phase of the capital master plan;

3. *Requests* all meeting requesters and organizers to liaise closely with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat on all matters related to the scheduling of meetings to allow maximum predictability in coordinating activities at Headquarters during the construction period;

4. *Requests* the Committee on Conferences to keep the matter under constant review, and requests the Secretary-General to report regularly to the Committee on matters pertaining to the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations during the construction period;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that implementation of the capital master plan, including the temporary relocation of conference-servicing staff to a swing space, will not compromise the quality of conference services provided to Member States and the equal treatment of the language services, which should be provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources, with a view to receiving maximum quality of services;

6. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide adequate information technology support for documentation services to ensure their seamless operation throughout the implementation of the capital master plan;

7. *Notes* that during the implementation of the capital master plan, a part of the conference-servicing staff and information technology resources of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will be temporarily relocated to a swing space, and requests the Secretary-General to provide adequate support to ensure continued maintenance of the information technology facilities of the Department, implementation of the global information technology initiative and delivery of quality conference services;

III

Integrated global management

1. *Notes with appreciation* the progress achieved in the implementation of the global information technology project, aimed at integrating, across duty stations, information technology into meetings management and documentation-processing systems, and the global approach to harmonizing standards and information technology and sharing good practices and technological achievements among conference services at the four main duty stations;

2. *Also notes with appreciation* the initiatives undertaken in the context of integrated global management aimed at streamlining procedures, achieving economies of scale and improving the quality of conference services, and in this regard stresses the importance of ensuring equal treatment of conference-servicing staff as well as the principle of equal grade for equal work at the four main duty stations;

3. *Reaffirms* that the major goals of the reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management are to provide high-quality documents in a timely manner in all official languages, as well as high-quality conference services to Member States at all duty stations, and to achieve those aims as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all language services are given equal treatment and are provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources, with a view to achieving maximum quality of those services, with full respect for the specificities of the six official languages and taking into account their respective workloads;

5. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the compatibility of technologies used in all duty stations and to ensure that they are user-friendly in all official languages;

6. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to complete the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents onto the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis, so that these archives are also available to Member States through that medium;

7. *Reiterates* that the satisfaction of Member States is a key performance indicator in conference management and conference services;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that measures taken by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, as a key performance indicator of the Department, provide equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and are in full compliance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, through the Committee on Conferences, on progress made in this regard;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to explore best practices and techniques in client satisfaction evaluations and to report on a regular basis to the General Assembly on the results achieved;

10. *Welcomes* the efforts made by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to systematically capture and analyse feedback from Member States and committee chairpersons and secretaries on the quality of conference services and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly apprised of progress made in integrated global management;

12. *Takes note* of the outcome of the work of the integrated global management task forces, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures of conference services developed on the basis of recommendations of the task forces are in full compliance with relevant General Assembly resolutions;

IV

Documentation and publication-related matters

1. *Emphasizes* the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations;

2. *Reaffirms* that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters;

respect for the specificities of each of the six official languages and taking into account their respective workloads;

4. *Requests* the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing special arrangements governing the recruitment of temporary assistance staff in the language services at the four main duty stations, in particular as regards their compliance with relevant staff regulations and rules and General Assembly mandates in the field of human resources management, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session through the Committee on Conferences;

5. *Expresses continued concern* at the high vacancy rate in the interpretation and translation services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, especially the chronic difficulty in staffing the Arabic Interpretation Unit, and requests the Secretary-General to address this as a matter of priority through, inter alia, assistance from Member States in advertising and facilitating the conduct of competitive examinations to fill these language vacancies;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to hold competitive examinations for the recruitment of language staff sufficiently in advance so as to fill current and future vacancies in the language services in a timely manner, bearing in mind the persistent situation at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and to inform the General Assembly at its sixty-third session of efforts in this regard;

7. *Notes with appreciation* the measures taken by the Secretariat to fill current and future vacancies at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and requests the Secretary-General to consider further measures aimed at decreasing the vacancy rates in Nairobi as an exceptional case and to inform the General Assembly at its sixty-third session of efforts in this regard;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to address the issue of succession planning by enhancing internal and external training programmes, developing staff exchange programmes among organizations and participating in outreach to institutions that train language staff for international organizations;

9. *Takes note* of the challenges presented by the demographic situation in the language services, as described in paragraphs 87 to 89 of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] requests the Secretary-General to take the measures necessary to avoid any negative impact on the quality of translation and interpretation and to report thereon, as appropriate;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to seek evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, including through the language-specific informational meetings held twice a year, and to ensure that such measures provide equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and are in full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to improve the accuracy of translation of documents into the official languages, giving particular significance to the quality of translation;

12. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to enhance translation quality in all official languages, in particular for contractual translation, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

13. *Takes note* of the information contained in paragraphs 90 to 92 of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] and requests the Secretary-General to provide at all duty stations adequate staff at the appropriate grade level, with a view to ensuring appropriate quality control for external translation;

14. *Notes* the performance measurement matrix proposed by the Secretary-General in response to the request to develop a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement and management from a full-system perspective, and looks forward to receiving the indicators for all duty stations beginning in 2008;

15. *Takes note* of the information on the impact of freelance recruitment on the quality of interpretation at all duty stations, contained in paragraphs 99 and 100 of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] welcomes the measures proposed in this regard, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the issue to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session through the Committee on Conferences;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the experience, lessons learned and best practices of the main duty stations in performing quality control of contractual translations, including on requirements relating to the number and appropriate level of the staff needed to carry out this function.

79th plenary meeting
22 December 2007